



National Security  
Personnel System

*Manager  
Supervisor*



*Communicating with Your*

**Staff**



*To successfully transition to NSPS, you, as a manager or supervisor, must actively communicate with your staff. You need to discuss with them why we are adopting NSPS and how NSPS will help us meet our organizational goals. This brochure explains:*

- The benefits of establishing effective communications about NSPS with your staff
- Key topics to communicate as your organization transitions to the new system
- Communications guidelines to use during NSPS implementation

## *Why* **Talk About NSPS?**

Most employees consider their supervisor their most trusted source for gathering information. Your staff believes you are acting in their best interest and what you say is truthful. They rely on you to help them understand NSPS and the impact NSPS will have on their work environment. By proactively communicating with your staff, you:

- **Reduce apprehension, uncertainty and confusion** – The more you and your staff discuss NSPS, the more they will understand the new system and what it means to work in a performance-based organization. A common understanding and shared vision contribute to a more efficient and effective work environment.
- **Dispel rumors** – By openly communicating with your staff and soliciting feedback, you will have the chance to address staff concerns and provide fact-based information that dispels any rumors and clarifies any misconceptions about NSPS.
- **Increase confidence** – Taking time to explain how NSPS benefits staff and helping your staff become familiar with its elements can raise their comfort level and ease their anxiety. Employees who understand where they fit in the big picture and what they need to do to succeed are going to be more open to NSPS.

As an organizational leader, it is essential that you openly communicate with your employees about NSPS. Employees must understand:

- Why the change to NSPS is taking place
- What it means to work in a pay-for-performance organization
- What is expected of them
- What skills they currently possess and those needed to succeed in NSPS

## *What* **Topics to Discuss**

Make time to discuss the following topics with your staff.

### **Describe the Move to a Performance Management System and How Performance is Tied to Compensation**

The NSPS performance management system requires robust, two-way communication between employees and supervisors. Be sure to explain that:

- **Individual performance expectations are linked to organizational goals.** Describe how your organizational goals relate to the DoD mission. Explain the near-term and long-term goals of your organization and how individual performance impacts mission accomplishment.
- **Each employee is responsible for individual success.** Employees work with you to establish performance goals and to meet expectations, and are recognized and rewarded for achieving their performance goals through individual and team accomplishments.
- **Employees and supervisors openly discuss individual performance goals and expectations.** Progress towards meeting performance expectations is discussed and evaluated on a frequent basis through informal and formal discussions.

### **New Opportunities – Safeguarding Employee Rights and Protections**

NSPS provides new opportunities for pay increases, rewards and career progression, while ensuring rights,

# Manager Supervisor



protections and current benefits. It offers managers and supervisors an improved system to acknowledge and reward job performance. Employees who achieve their performance goals through individual and team contributions can be recognized and rewarded.

As you transition to NSPS, take time to communicate these opportunities to your staff while continuing to reassure them about their benefits and protections.

## *How* to Communicate

Remember the following guidelines as you prepare your staff for NSPS.

### **Encourage Effective Communication**

Heighten your staff's understanding of the system and make them aware of potential opportunities through clear and timely communication. Take advantage of the following opportunities to provide your staff with information on NSPS changes, training and benefits:

- Memos and e-mail messages
- Conference calls
- Newsletters
- Staff meetings
- Organization website
- Performance management discussions

### **Be Proactive and Available for Discussion**

Despite all of the constraints on your availability, schedule time to discuss NSPS with your staff. Talk to them individually and as a group, using whatever time is needed to convey what you know. If your staff ask questions that you are unable to answer, do not be afraid to admit it. Gather the questions and concerns and make a commitment to get back to them when you have more information. The more time you spend explaining NSPS, the more your staff will understand and accept it. (Supervisors of bargaining unit employees should discuss employee meetings with the servicing HR office in advance to ensure statutory labor relations obligations are met.)

### **Ask for Feedback; Address it Constructively**

As NSPS is implemented, feedback from staff can help you identify those areas where more communication is needed. In addition, feedback can help you identify areas for process clarification and improvement.

When you solicit feedback, be prepared for whatever feedback you get, whether positive or negative. Amplify positive feedback and share it with your group.

Acknowledge resistance and address it by reinforcing the benefits of NSPS to the individual and to the organization. When it is appropriate, share your experiences and ask others to talk about their experiences.

## *When?* Start Today

Over the next few months, take the first steps to ready your organization for NSPS:

- Work with your staff to establish opportunities for open discussion. Ask lots of questions and share your findings.
- Ask for help in identifying ways you can solicit and respond to feedback.
- Help staff members begin to identify ways they can contribute to achieving organizational objectives. Work together to redefine tasks to match organizational objectives. Explain why assignments may change.
- Identify and communicate staff skill development and learning opportunities.
- Create lines of communication to discuss issues that affect achieving your organizational objectives.
- Stay in close contact with your servicing HR office and local NSPS Program Office.



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## **For More Information**

### **NSPS**

Visit the NSPS website –  
<http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps>

### **NSPS in Your Component**

Visit the Air Force at:  
<http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dpp/dppn/nsps/index.cfm>

Visit the Army Civilian Personnel On-Line at:  
<http://www.cpol.army.mil>

Visit the Fourth Estate at:  
<http://hrd.whs.mil>

Visit the Navy Knowledge Online at:  
<https://wwwa.nko.navy.mil>